



Director of
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***Monday
5 April 1982***

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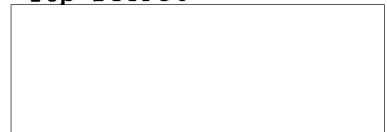
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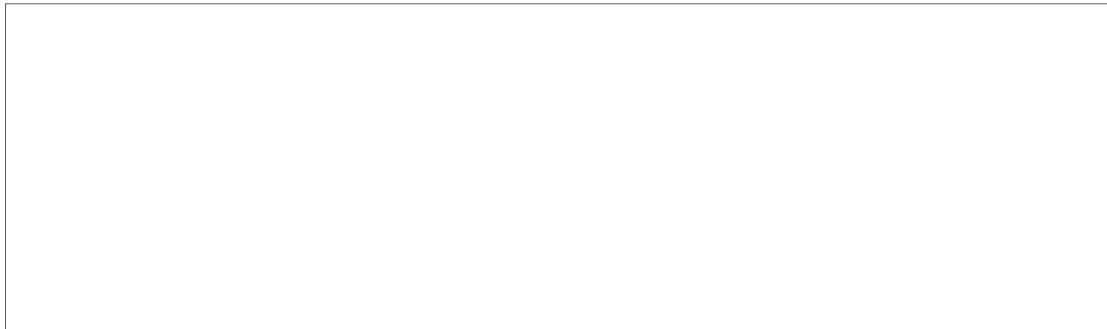


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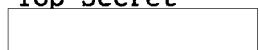
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② CENTRAL AMERICA: Slow Salvadoran Political Progress

Disagreement within the National Conciliation Party over how to exploit its position as power broker is hampering efforts to construct a coalition "government of national unity." The Guatemalan junta is adopting some policies that will increase its already wide public support, but political figures and junior and senior military officers seeking to further their own, sometimes conflicting, interests could still force leadership changes.

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Meanwhile, D'Aubuisson reportedly may be seeking support among junior military officers. The armed forces are concerned that political infighting could poison the positive atmosphere created by the election.

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5 Nevertheless, most reports indicate that D'Aubuisson's presumed objectives have little support in the armed forces. Members of the high command claim to have warned rightists that they will not be permitted to turn back the clock by annulling reforms or excluding the Christian Democrats.

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Comment:

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6 If the National Republican Alliance delegate-elect who was shot on Saturday is perceived to have been a victim of the political rivalry--not a far-fetched assumption in El Salvador--rather than a guerrilla target, the efforts to form a coalition could be seriously hindered.

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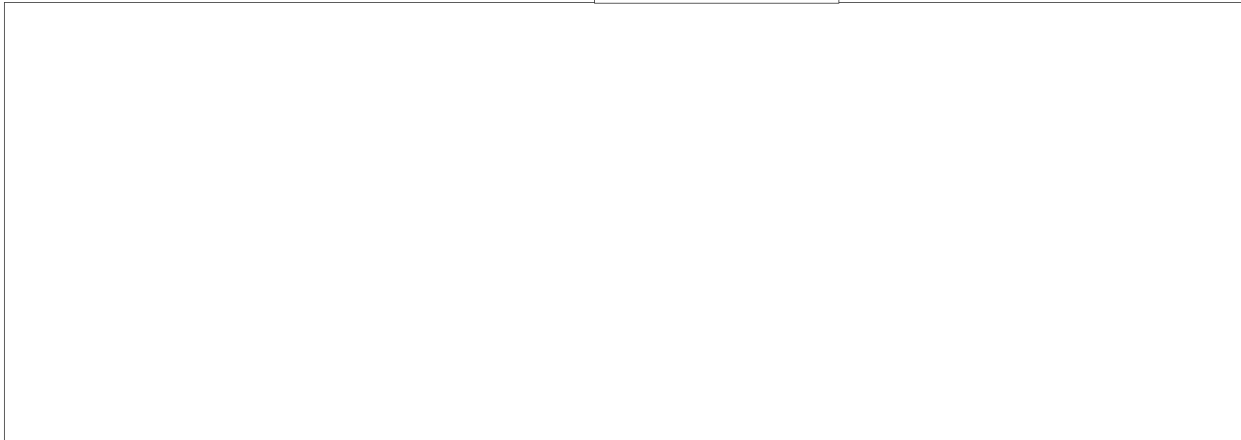


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Guatemalan Political Maneuvering

7 The coup two weeks ago received wide public support, and the junta has added to that by permitting some religious workers to return to Guatemala, arresting some allegedly corrupt former government officials, and reducing official violence and human rights abuses, particularly by the police. 


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9/1 Comment: The leaders of the National Liberation Movement are less interested in the junta's reforms than an early return to constitutional rule. They evidently believe they won a plurality in the presidential election and would like to force the junta to schedule a new vote soon--at least within a year--to capitalize on their current electoral strength. 

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1 The junta's reforms should relieve it of some pressure from junior officers, while its command assignments probably will placate the senior military leadership. Nevertheless, the continuing difficulty of satisfying both groups will keep alive the possibility of a junta shakeup or a counter coup. 

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⑨ VIETNAM-KAMPUCHEA: Hanoi's Revised Strategy

Over the past several months, Vietnam has adopted a new strategy designed to discourage ASEAN support for the Kampuchean resistance and to erode international opposition to its occupation of Kampuchea. The success thus far of this approach, which combines an aggressive military campaign along the Thai-Kampuchean border with increased diplomatic contacts, will reinforce Hanoi's determination to remain in Kampuchea.

During the last dry season from November 1980 to May 1981, Vietnamese forces in Kampuchea concentrated on extending Vietnam's administrative control of the country. Much of this effort was devoted to supporting the national elections in April 1981 that were intended to strengthen Vietnam's puppet regime in Phnom Penh.

With the exception of one unsuccessful assault against a Democratic Kampuchea base, there were no large-scale Vietnamese military sweeps through contested areas. As a result, Democratic Kampuchean forces were able to extend their areas of operation, build up their strength, and improve their organization.

The Vietnamese also lost ground on the international political front during 1981. They failed in their bid at the UN last fall to unseat Democratic Kampuchea as the legitimate government of Kampuchea. Two key resolutions passed at the International Conference on Kampuchea in July, which called for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchea and the holding of UN-supervised elections, constituted a major defeat.

New Approaches

These setbacks apparently persuaded Hanoi to alter its strategy. During the current dry season the Vietnamese have launched the most aggressive military campaign in Kampuchea since the invasion three years ago.

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Vietnamese troops have forced the guerrillas out of several important bases. The Vietnamese are strengthening their positions in newly gained areas, where they evidently intend to remain in the rainy season. []

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The Vietnamese also have increased diplomatic activities aimed at portraying a conciliatory image. Communiques from the Indochina Foreign Ministers' Conference in February, for example, reaffirmed Hanoi's willingness to participate in a regional conference on Kampuchea and to establish a demilitarized zone along the Thai-Kampuchean border. []

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In addition, Hanoi has used the recent visits of French, Indian, and UN officials to display a readiness to hold bilateral discussions with Thailand on the Kampuchean issue. Opportunities to continue this diplomatic effort will occur later this month, when Vietnamese Foreign Minister Thach visits several West European countries to discuss economic aid. []

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The Vietnamese hope that this diplomatic and military activity will create dissension in ASEAN, and they have some reason to be encouraged. Indonesia and Malaysia have already voiced misgivings over the long-term viability of ASEAN's hardline policy, and Indonesia has been pessimistic about the effectiveness of any aid provided to the resistance. []

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By increasing contacts with West European countries, Hanoi also appears to be trying to take advantage of recent breaches of Western support for ASEAN's approach. These include the renewal of French economic aid and the granting of EC humanitarian assistance to Vietnam. []

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Prospects

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Hanoi's strategy is unlikely to produce an immediate change in ASEAN policy, although Vietnam's strong position in Kampuchea limits the organization's options. Moreover, the belief of most ASEAN members that Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea and the growing Soviet presence in Southeast

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8 Asia are serious threats to regional stability has so far outweighed arguments--particularly from Indonesia--to adopt a more conciliatory approach. []

8 Vietnam's other goals will be equally difficult to achieve quickly. West European officials are unlikely to grant large amounts of aid, and they may use Thach's visit to express concern over Vietnamese actions. []

8 It remains an open question, moreover, whether Vietnam will ever be able to break the back of the resistance. There are less than six weeks remaining in the dry season, and the insurgents will regain some of their strength when the rains begin to bog down Vietnam's already strained logistic system. []

6/7 Nevertheless, Hanoi probably believes that its strategy will eventually pay off. Continuing military successes over the next several dry seasons would further discredit the insurgents and weaken the willingness of their domestic and foreign supporters to provide aid. Moreover, if Hanoi could confine the resistance to remote areas of Kampuchea, the regime in Phnom Penh might be able to strengthen its political position and expand economic development. []

6/7 These developments would enable the Vietnamese to make a token withdrawal of troops. The Vietnamese probably believe that such a move, coupled with even small offers of additional aid, would in turn reduce international opposition to their occupation of Kampuchea. It also could compel ASEAN to make its peace with Vietnam. []

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